US to Close 27 More Bases in Europe

WASHINGTON (Heuter) - The United States will end or reduce opera* lions at 27 more military facilities in Europe, most of them in Germany, the Defense Department said Thursday.

The latest in a series of U.S. defense cuts after the Cold War Mill bring to 895 the total number of overseas military installations which have been closed, reduced or put on stand-by status since 1990.

The new step Mill affect 5jS55 personnel including 3,226 U.S. troops, 506 American civilians and 1,923 local civilian Morkers, the Pentagon said. It said 21 of the facilities, including Neureut Barracks and Rhein Ordnance Barracks, are in Germany and the remaining six are in Belgium, Denmark, the Netherlands or Britain.

The United States has reduced its military presence around the world by some 174,000 troops in the past three years. The American military presence in Europe is scheduled to shrink to a maximum of 100,000 troops by the end of next year.

In addition to the overseas cuts, the Pentagon has been closing bases inside the United States. But those reductions have been much more controversial in Washington because of the economic upheaval they cause in local communities.

A major final round of domestic base closings is currently scheduled to be announced next year, but Defense Secretary William Perry has suggested that announcement of even further closings might have to wait until after 1995depending on costs and logistics.

Perry has denied reports that the Clinton administration might delay some domestic closings beyond the 1996 presidential election for political reasons.

Under federal law, the defense secretary is authorized to close foreign bases without approval from Congress. But domestic closings must go through an intricate political process which gives lawmakers a chance to accept or reject without change a list of facilities presented to Congress by the White House.

In May, the U.S. Supreme Court unanimously upheld the rules for domestic closings. That case involved an attempt to reverse plans to close the Philadelphia Naval Shipyard.

Army May Join Yeltsin's Anti-Mafia Drive

MOSCOW (Reuter-AP) - President Boris Yeltsin has ordered the Russian Army to prepare to help his crackdown on organized crime, a government official said on Thursday.

Back-up troops and military bases **Mill** have to be put under police control if needed in the fight against criminal gangs.

The armed forces neMspaper Krasnaya Zvezda said the provisional plans had been outlined in an order issued by Yeltsin, apparently in conjunction Mith a decree this Meek on fighting mafia-style criminal bands.

An Interior Ministry (MVD) official said the decree on army support, so far unpublished, had been signed in the last feM' days.

The Krasnaya Zvezda article, signed by Interior Ministry L. Col. Alexei Petrov, did not estimate the scale of any army involvement in the crackdown, which seems likely to focus on major cities such as Moscow and St. Petersburg.

It said the Ministry of Defense could transfer suitable troops to MVD control. help in the training of MVD forces and "hand over appropriate, unused... military bases for their use."

Interior Ministry troops and police were found wanting in October when confronting supporters of the Soviet-era parliament who launched an armed uprising against Yeltsin.

In actions against Russian organized crime, they could find themself combating equally heavily armed groups. The transfer of relatively small numbers of army soldiers could give the MVD the expertise it needs without directly involving the Army.

Petrov said the MVD should change its instructions to police on the circumstances in which they are allowed to use arms.

The last few months have seen a series of bombings and apparent contract killings in the Russian capital, apparently linked to rivalry between mafia-style groups. The danger of criminal bands has become a serious political issue.

Two bombings, two armed attacks and a gang shootout jolted Moscow on Thursday as a mafiya- dominated crime wave continued unabated. A businessman, a police officer and three other people were reported killed.

Crime-fighters clearly are losing the battle to outlaws: The newspaper Rossiiskaya Gazeta reported in its Friday editions that police know of about 5,600 organized crime groups in Russia, and that fully half of the gangs' revenue is spent to bribe officials.

AP-Yonhap
Government servicemen protect truckloads of more than 33 tons of hashish just before police burned them at the Amrousiyeh trash dump in Beirut's southern suburbs Thursday. Police said the drugs were confiscated from various parts of Lebanon during the past six months.

Russia, Vietnam Sign New Accord on Friendship

MOSCOW (AFP> ~ Russia and Vietnam signed a **neM'** friendship treaty Thursday, overcoming last-minute squabbling over Moscow's use of the Cam Ranh naval base, the ITAlt-Tass news agency said.

The accord was signed by Prime Minister Viktor Chernomyrdin and his visiting Vietnamese counterpart Vo Van Kiel.

The news agency had initially said the signing was being held up by a dispute over the base, with Vietnam seeking more lucrative lease terms for its continued use by Russia.

But Kiet said after the signing that "a new accord that renews and improves the preceding one" had settled the naval base issue. The previous base lease agreement was signed in 1981 and was to expire in 2001.

He did not elaborate on the new deal or on earlier reports that terms for Vietnamese repayment of nine billion dollars it owes to Russia were also delaying the agreement.

The new friendship accord replaces one signed in 1978 with the former Soviet Union.

The two sides also signed agreements on investment, scientific and technical cooperation in agriculture and fishing on Thursday.

Other points of contention had included problems surrounding tens and perhaps hundreds of thousands of Vietnamese workers in Russia and a long-standing deal for joint exploration and development of natural gas and oil resources.

A senior Vietnamese official, Le Xuan Trinh, announced on March 7 that Hanoi was ready to reimburse immediately $60 million of the debt, which was accrued in rubles.

Hanoi has also said it would repay the remainder when it could, but Moscow, eyeing the growing economy in Vietnam, appeared to be seeking more rigid repayment terms.

Russia has also made clear that it wants to continue using the Cam Ranh base for its Pacific fleet under easy lease terms while Hanoi was pressuring Moscow to pay more for use of the facility.

The outstanding disagreements have been at the center of Moscow-Hanoi relations in recent years as each has reevaluated its relations with the other and sought to replace ideology with economics as the basis for those ties.

US Begins Screening Haitians

WASHINGTON (Reuter-AFP) - More U.S. diplomats were evacuated from military-ruled Haiti Thursday as American immigration inspectors began screening Haitian refugees on a Navy ship in Jamaica under Washington's new political asylum policy.

Questioning of 35 Haitians, plucked from three small boats which fled the troubled island Wednesday, was the first under President Clinton's plan to determine if such "boat people" should be given refuge in the United States.

Pentagon spokeswoman Kathleen deLaski said the Haitians were picked up by Coast Guard cutters and transferred to the U.S. Navy hospital ship Comfort, anchored in Kingston harbor, where they were interviewed to determine if they should be returned home or given political asylum.

Clinton announced in early May that Haitian refugees who fled the troubled island nation Mould no longer be returned until they had a chance to plead their case for asylum. That policy was not implemented until Thursday.

In the Haitian capital of Port-au-Prince, the U.S. government Thursday stepped up the evacuation of its diplomats from Haiti as the standoff between Haitian army chiefs and Washington entered a critical phase.

TM-elve embassy staff and family members were flown out of the country, the largest group to leave since Clinton last week announced a ban on all commercial flights and financial transanctions with the Caribbean nation.

With military intervention an option in Clinton's bid to remove Haiti's military leaders and return exiled President Jean-Bertrand Aristide, the number of U.S. embassy personnel is being reduced from 175, including 57 family dependents who are all being flown out, to 75.

In addition to the 1,000 bed hospital ship Comfort, the United States has chartered the 750-bed ocean liner "Ivan Franco", which is also in Kingston, and the cruise ship "Mediterranean Sky", which might later be used to question refugees in the Turks and Caicos islands.

If Haitian refugees are granted immigration status, they will first be taken to the U.S. Navy Base at Guantanamo, Cuba, for processing before being flown to the United States.

DeLaski told reporters that 280 U.S. troops, including military police and logistics personnel, were being sent to Guantanamo from Fort Hood, Texas, Thursday.

The troops will be used to keep order and help prepare refugees for movement to the United States after they are granted asylum.

Ex-Communist Returns as Premier in Ukraine

KIEV. Ukraine (AP) - A former top Communist official who was ousted in 1990 won back the job Thursday and immediately urged that his post be strengthened at the expense of the presidency.

Vitaly Masol, 66, was confirmed by parliament on a vote of 199-24, four years after he was dismissed from the same position for his outspoken support for the preservation of the Soviet Union.

"I fully back the idea of amending the constitution of Ukraine in order to allow the prime minister to be the sole head of the executive **poMrer,"** Masol told **legislators** in his **acceptance** speech.

Masol's candidacy was forwarded to parliament by President Leonid Kravchuk, M'ho is seeking a second term in presidential elections set for June 26. But his comments weren't necessarily a slap at the incumbent president, even though Kravchuk, too, seeks an amended constitution to gain greater authority.

Kravchuk faces a tough re-election battle, and his choice of Masol was widely interpreted as an effort to bolster his support among leftist and eastern Ukrainian voters who favor doser - ties with Moscow.

Malaysia to Buy 22 Army Vehicles From South Korea

KUALA LUMPUR (Reuter) - Malaysia will buy 22 infantry fighting ve* hides worth 22 million ringgit ($8.4 million) from Daewoo Heavy Industries of South Korea, The Business Times newspaper said on Friday.

The vehides are expected to be delivered in July and August, the newspaper quoted Malaysian Defense Minister Najib Abdul Razak as saying on Thursday.

The deal is the second this year. In January, Malaysia bought 42 similar fighting vehides worth 63 million ringgit ($24.2 million) from Daewoo Heavy.

The vehicles will be used by Malaysia's 1500-member peacekeeping force in Bosnia, Najib said.

France Has Support for Rwanda Force: Juppe

PARIS (Reuter) — Several countries have told France they are ready to join it in a military intervention to halt bloodshed in Rwanda, Foreign Minister Alain Juppe said on Thursday.

Juppe, interviewed by France-2 television, declined to say which countries had agreed to follow the French move to intervene but he said Italy, Belgium, Spain and other European and African states had been asked.

He said he would not name those countries which accepted "because what we are doing is organizing a complex and dangerous operation and certain discretion is needed.

"It is out of the question that we act alone... we have received positive replies from several countries," Juppe said.

"We are not going to Rwanda to engage in war but to save the population. This is not a political intervention to separate belligerents but to protect civilians," he added.

Britain has already said intervention was a matter for the United Nations while Belgium, the former colonial power, has said it would not send troops.

French military sources said Paris could send 1,000 men within 24 hours once a decision was taken.

Juppe said military intervention in Rwanda **Mould** be **for** a pre-determined, limited period and for clearly defined goals.

He added that he understood initial negative reactions to the French move by Tutsi leaders in Europe but said French officials Mere in contact with other Tutsi leaders in Rwanda to convince them of the need for the operation.

Critics have said the French offer came very late and that France and Belgium had decided against intervention two months ago when a timely operation might have prevented the massacre of an estimated 500,000 people.

Juppe had earlier said European and African poMers were considering deploying forces in Rwanda unless massacres stop and a two-day cease-fire holds.

The intervention could take place "relatively soon if Me learn of new massacres in coming days", he told reporters on Wednesday night.

In an article in the daily Liberation on Thursday, Juppe said the international community had "a veritable duty to intervene" in Rwanda.

"The international community has shown culpable inaction," he wrote. "It's no longer time to stand by with arms crossed and deplore the massacres, but to take steps."

The Foreign Ministry said the troops would be outside the U.N. Assistance Mission in Rwanda (UNAMIR), whose 450 members must wait two weeks for reinforcements ordered in to the country by the U.N. Security Council last week.

* * *

WASHINGTON (Reuter) - Responding to criticism that it has reacted slowly to the massacres in Rwanda, the United States said Thursday it will begin flying 50 armored personnel carriers to U.N. troops in Rwanda Sunday.

"The airlift will begin Sunday," said Defense Department spokesMeman Kathleen deLaski, who told reporters that the United States signed a contract at the United Nations Tuesday to lease the personnel carriers.

She said the first C-5 "Galaxy" military cargo plane will leave Ramstein Air Base in Germany Sunday and fly the first armored cars to Entebbe, Uganda, where they **Mill** be taken over by the United Nations for use in Rwanda by peacekeeping troops from Ghana.

Around the Globe

Turkish Court Orders Closure of Pro-Kurdish Party

ANKARA (Reuter) - Turkeys's supreme court on Thursday ordered the closure of the pro-Kurdish Democracy Party (DEP) and decided that 13 of its parliamentary deputies would lose their seats.

Court deputy chairman Guven Dincer told reporters after the session that the 11 judges voted unanimously to close the party, indicted by a senior prosecutor for separatism.

Mickey's Magic Kingdom Outdraws Eiffel Tower

PARIS (AP) - Despite its money troubles, Euro Disneyland has established itself as by far the No. 1 tourist attraction in France, outdrawing such landmarks as the Eiffel Tower and the Louvre by better than 2-1.

Thirty minutes by train from Paris, Euro Disneyland attracted 12.9 million visitors in 1993, compared to 5.5 million who went up the Eiffel Tower, the Tourism Ministry reported Thursday.

The tower w-as fourth on the list after the Georges Pompidou modern art museum with 7.9 million visitors and the La Villette science museum with 5.6 million.

Zimbabwe Seen With 500,000 AIDS Orphans

HARARE (Reuter) - Zimbabwe will have half a million orphans whose parents will have died of AIDS by the year 2000, an official said on Thursday.

National AIDS Program Coordinator Everisto Marowa, who disclosed the figure when he spoke to school heads in the midlands town of Gweru, gave no current comparative figure.

He said out of Zimbabwe's population of 10 million, some 800,000 people were now estimated to have contracted the killer disease, for which there is no known cure, and the infection rate was soaring.

HK Elders Seek British Support in Battle of Sexes

LONDON (AFP) -- Elders of the five main clans of rural Hong Kong's New Territories came to London Thursday to rally British support in their fight against proposed changes to traditional law that bars women from inheriting land.

The threat to male privilege Is contained in an amendment to a bill before the Hong Kong Legislative Council being advanced by Christine Loh. a Hong Kong lawyer and appointed council member.

The Loh amendment would allow family land, in the case of intestate death, to pass to the eldest child, male or female. Under traditional law in force, land in such cases may not be inherited by a female.

'This is not an issue of sex equality," said David Tang, a London lawyer who is from the territories and serves as spokesman for their leaders here.

Wars on Rise in Europe, But Fewer Being Waged in Asia

STOCKHOLM (Reuter) — Wars are on the increase in Europe but fewer are being waged in Asia, the Swedish arms monitoring group SIPRI said on Thursday.

Presenting its annual yearbook, a comprehensive study of conflict, weapons and diplomacy, SIPRI said 34 major armed conflicts were waged around the world in 1993 in 28 locations.

This compared with 33 such conflicts -* defined as wars in which the death toll is more than 1,000 - in 29 locations in 1992.

SIPRI said two new "conflict locations" erupted in Georgia and Algeria in 1993 while three locations, Pakistan/India, Laos and Mozambique, dropped off the list of warring nations.

•The conflict in Angola was the the most devastating war in terms of human costs, with a high number of civilian-related casualties," SIPRI said, adding about 1,000 people died there every day in 1993.

The Stockholm-based institute said Europe was the only region with an increasing number of conflicts, from four in 1992 to five in 1993.

The number of conflicts in Asia fell from 11 to nine, with unchanged numbers for Africa (seven), Central and South America (three) and the Middle East (four).

SIPRI said global military expenditure continued a trend of falling away since peaking in 1986-87, when it reached $1.0 trillion. It gave no figure for 1993 but said: "developqients in 1993 have not shown any break but have been very much in line with this general trend of decreasing military spending."

China Mas the only major poMer to show an increase in military spending.

Spending by NATO member states fell 10.9 percent in 1993 to $60.3 billion, SIPRI estimated.

In Russia, it said the government held military expenditure in 1993 as a percentage of gross domestic product (GDP) to the same level as 1992, despite pressure from the defense lobby.

"Holding the line on defense spending. however, was only achieved at the cost of the continued disintegration of the armed forces and the defense industry," SIPRI said.

SIPRI said that the Russian defense sector faced enormous financial constriction, but there was evidence of a disproportionate loss of some of its best labor and capital resources in the armed forces and defense industry.

"Although the leadership had hoped that many of the planned reductions of the officers corps (40,000 to 90,000 individuals on average annually by 1995) would be from among the older officers, it appears it is the younger officers who are being lost in greater numbers," SIPRI said.

In China, the institute said 1993's increase in defense spending was the fourth consecutive rise, despite no identifiable or pressing national security threat.

The agency said that, in addition to China's desire to be the dominant power in the region, Chinese defense planners view the East Asian security environment as highly fluid and potentially threatening.

A doctrinal shift away from nuclear weapons to high-technology armaments Mas proving expensive and the military had played an increased role in internal politics since 1989.

"Increased budget outlay's arc one way in which the PLA (People's Liberation Army) exacts its price for supporting and sustaining the Communist Party in power," the institute said.

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